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**NELC Placement and Commissioning Panel**

**Principles**

Children in care in North East Lincolnshire should, where possible, be in family-based placements within the borough. All placements for children and young people should be proportionate and focused on developing a child’s strengths and meeting and reducing their needs.

**Objectives**

* The panel will ratify all placements for Children Looked After and Care Leavers in North East Lincolnshire.
* In doing so the panel will consider individual care plans and pathway plans to ensure that they focus clearly on the needs of Children and Young People and that their Health, Education, and other needs are being addressed properly.
* The Panel will ensure that actions are being taken to draw up permanency plans for children when required.
* The panel will be responsible for the allocation of the placement budgets, highlighting the need for financial contributions from Health, Education and Adults holding parental responsibility as appropriate. This will ensure that plan for Children and Young People, placement decisions and resource allocation are brough together in one Forum.
* The panel will consider requests for commissioning of other costs associated with placements, for example additional therapeutic, health or educational costs, including taxis on anything other than a one-off basis.
* The panel does not make casework decisions and does not perform a supervisory function although both excellent and poor practice will be brought to the attention of the relevant AD/ Head of Service.
* The panel will also complete the survey detailing placement provider for the White Rose framework to inform continued commissioning requirements.

**Criteria for Presenting to Panel**

* All requests for placements will need to be presented to this panel. This includes Foster Care, in house and respite (private and voluntary placements) placements with Connected Carers, residential Children Homes, supported lodgings, semi-independent and mother and baby placements. This also includes Children with disabilities, specialist provision and all other settings.
* Requests should be made to panel before a placement is made, unless a child or young person has to be placed in an emergency in which case representation MUST BE made at the next panel retrospectively or agreement/continuation is not approved.
* If a child needs to be moved from an existing placement or their placement disrupts then the child needs to be re-presented to panel. If the placement is an emergency move, then the arrangement will need to be re-presented to the next panel retrospectively or again will not be agreed.
* Requests to pay retainers for placements to be open, for an example where a child is on a reunification programme home for a trial period must be presented to panel for agreement. Changes in staff ratios for Young People for example 2-1 for a short period also need to come to panel and agreement sought- please note additional staff to Young Person ratio is short time focused approach and is not for longer than a few days.

**Membership and Meeting Details**

**Who are the panel?**

The panel consists of:

* Assistant Director – Chair
* Panel Administrator
* CCG Commissioner/ Clinical Lead
* Senior Education Rep/Virtual Schools Head
* Fostering/ Residential Rep
* Senior Operational Manager
* Commissioning/Procurement/Contract Rep
* Finance Rep
* Some partners will be virtual- Housing and Adults
* Any observers/ New starters (please book for observations through the chair) and all are welcome[[1]](#footnote-1)

The panel is held on a Monday between 1-5pm and slots are allocated each week with agenda setting.

All paperwork to be presented must be sent to the Administrator on the Wed at 3pm before Monday panel every week so it can be sent electronically to panel members.

**Who comes to panel?**

All allocated social workers known to the child will be asked to present their child/young person and give a brief but detailed assessment of need. All staff need to attend with their line manager.

**Paperwork requested**

* Referral form
* Most up to date assessment
* Care plan/CIN/CP plan
* Any specialist assessment which you consider may assist panel (CAHMS, Parenting)

Should an application for panel be presented during the time paperwork is sent and Panel meets then emergency placements will be seen and paperwork completed retrospectively to avoid drift and delay.

**What to do before panel?**

Before cases are presented to panel there is a clear expectation that the social work teams with partners have sought alternatives to a care placement wherever possible. This would include creative problem solving, discussions with family members, negotiations with partner agencies/organisations who may be able to offer help and consideration of alternative methods of supporting the child and his/her family.

Evidence of this work will be required for the panel to reach a decision.

**Early warning/concern a placement may be needed**

When it becomes apparent that a child or a young person may require a placement and that her/his needs cannot be met with the birth or wider family and a more specialist provision is required this should be in the first instance discussed with your line Manager. Early identification of a growing issue and the opportunity to discuss some early intervention to resolve will assist in finding alternative solutions to a care placement.

**All Care placements**

Permission must be sought from the Children Services Assistant Director via the relevant Head of Service before any child can be accommodated by NELC whether that be in a planned or an emergency. This includes a child with a connected Carer family or friend.

The placement search will not be commenced without this permission being received and the request should go to the AD via the relevant Head of Service.

**Placement Reviews**

All placements will be subject to review and a date set by Panel. Long term stable placements will be reviewed with less frequency (unless circumstances change) but will still need to be presented when booked. Cases where there several services commissioned, or all Partners are funding the care plan will be subject to more frequent attendance.

All Care Leavers at 16 should have been to panel to look at independent/ alternative care options.

**Links to Legal Gateway and planning**

Where a placement is required to support a decision to remove a child the placement panel should still be booked for a placement search. Where the court orders (unlikely but if unavoidable) the child/ young person should still be booked to panel for attendance for tracking purposes.

**Legal and parents**

This panel is an internal business process designed to assist in managing and administering the placement budgets and finite budgets in an equitable way, consequently parents will not be invited or asked to attend or make specific representations. In the event of a disagreement regarding a care planning/resource decision this would need to be fed up through the escalation process to the Director of Children Services.

**Decision Making**

Where possible, decisions regarding placement will be achieved via consensus within the panel. If a consensus cannot be reached, the decision of the Chair should be deemed as final.

The decision will be recorded on the child’s file as a management decision/discussion case note with a heading of: PLACEMENT PANEL. The formal minutes of the meeting will be recorded in the documents section of Liquidlogic and categorised as: P25 YYYY/MM/DD LEGAL MEETINGS (PLACEMENT PANEL).

Staff are reminded to make their own notes on actions and recommendations on attendance.

1. requests to chair in advance of the meeting [↑](#footnote-ref-1)